

Penn State Student COVID-19 Guidance for Faculty and Instructors (Updated August 16, 2022)

This document will be updated, and revisions highlighted in yellow as new information and guidance becomes available.

What does it mean if I receive a notice that a student in my class has been placed in isolation?

- If a student has been placed in isolation, this means Penn State has initiated its contact tracing effort. The contact tracing office is charged with communicating with students who test positive, collecting known close contacts and notifying those who are at risk through close contact. You will receive a formal notification from the University in the form of an email from "Student Support Services" via Maxient, our case management system.
- A student may notify you that they have been placed in isolation before you receive a formal notification; if this is the case, and the student was tested through the University, then you do not need to notify Contact Tracing. If you know the student tested off campus, please encourage the student to reach out to Contact Tracing or you may complete this form with as much detail as possible, making sure that you include the date that the COVID test was taken.

https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/SAIT_Webapps/COVIDReferral/

- You may continue your class in-person as originally planned after you receive notification that a student from your class has been placed into isolation. Depending on the timing of the class and of the student's positive test, receiving this notice does not mean that the student had COVID at the time they last attended your class.

- **Updated CDC and PSU guidelines do not require quarantine after exposure, regardless of vaccination status. Students who have been exposed are strongly encouraged to wear a well-fitting, high quality mask for 10 days following exposure and to test on day 5. Contact Tracing will continue to collect close contacts and notify students via email with further instruction for masking and testing.**

Is there something I can do to help with contact tracing efforts and keep myself, and the students in my class, safe?

- Contact Tracing relies on information provided by a positive case or individuals who can confirm a student meets the close contact definition. If a student who tests positive for COVID does not know the students who were seated near them in class, then it may not be possible for contact tracers to identify close contacts, if any, in the class. There are two primary ways in which you can assist with contact tracing efforts. First, if class

size permits, consider maintaining a seating chart and taking attendance prior to each class period. Second, encourage your students to self-disclose to you if they have tested positive for COVID. Assure students that you will not identify them with other students and will not in any way attach a stigma to their positive diagnosis. Having both pieces of information – direct knowledge of a positive case AND information about who was sitting in the vicinity (within 6 feet) of the student and when, will assist contact tracers in identifying close contacts in the classroom.

- You may submit a referral form if you are aware of a student who has tested positive off campus or is a confirmed close contact in your classroom.

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- Faculty members will receive an email from Student Support Services via Maxient that provides the most conservative date when the isolated student may attend class again. If a student's dates change for some reason (e.g., contact tracing learned of their symptoms start date, testing out options) the student should provide faculty with an email from contacttracing@psu.edu indicating the new return date.

Guidance pertaining to students who are not in isolation

- If a student not in isolation reports to you that they feel ill or that they think they have been exposed, they should be excused from class and advised to contact University Health Services ASAP. The contact tracing process does not begin until an individual has a positive test result.

Managing student absences

- Students who contract this virus will have varying symptoms, from mild cold symptoms to flulike symptoms to hospitalization (the least likely). Mild to moderate illness can last up to 10 days. Students are being encouraged to communicate with their faculty to describe their level of illness and the work that they can accomplish while they are ill. Other related challenges that might impact attendance should be communicated to faculty in a similar fashion.
- [Senate Policy 42-27 on Class Attendance](#) emphasizes the importance of regular attendance but also grants faculty a great deal of latitude in providing reasonable opportunities for students to make up work for legitimate and unavoidable reasons including illness, family emergency, etc. Although faculty can use their judgment in assessing a student's illness claim, students are not required to secure the signature of medical personnel and faculty do not need to secure documentation to support their professional judgement